Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

Monday, September 1, 2003
Volume 39—Number 35
Pages 1105–1126

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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on August 29, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for $80.00 per year ($137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for $93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is $3.00 ($3.75 for foreign mailing).

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Week Ending Friday, August 29, 2003

The President's Radio Address

August 23, 2003

Good morning. Earlier this week, terrorists struck the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. The U.N. personnel and Iraqi citizens killed in the bombings were engaged in a purely humanitarian mission. Men and women in the building were working on reconstruction, medical care for Iraqis, and the distribution of food. Among the dead was Sergio Vieira de Mello, the U.N. Representative for Iraq, a good man serving an important cause.

On the same day, a terrorist in Jerusalem murdered 20 innocent people riding a bus, including 5 Americans. The killer had concealed under his clothing a bomb filled with metal fragments, designed to kill and injure the greatest number of people possible. Among the 110 people hurt were 40 children.

These two bombings reveal once again the nature of the terrorists and why they must be defeated. In their malicious view of the world, no one is innocent. Relief workers and infants alike are targeted for murder. Terrorism may use religion as a disguise, but terrorism violates every religion and every standard of decency and morality.

The terrorists have declared war on every free nation and all our citizens. Their goals are clear. They want more governments to resemble the oppressive Taliban that once ruled Afghanistan. Terrorists commit atrocities because they want the civilized world to flinch and retreat so they can impose their totalitarian vision. There will be no flinching in this war on terror, and there will be no retreat.

From Afghanistan to Iraq to the Philippines and elsewhere, we are waging a campaign against the terrorists and their allies wherever they gather, wherever they plan, and wherever they act. This campaign requires sacrifice, determination, and resolve, and we will see it through. Iraq is an essential front in this war. Now we're fighting terrorists and remnants of that regime who have everything to lose from the advance of freedom in the heart of the Middle East.

In most of Iraq, there is steady movement toward reconstruction and a stable, self-governing society. This progress makes the remaining terrorists even more desperate and willing to lash out against symbols of order and hope like coalition forces and U.N. personnel. The world will not be intimidated. A violent few will not determine the future of Iraq, and there will be no return to the days of Saddam Hussein's torture chambers and mass graves.

Working with Iraqis, coalition forces are on the offensive against these killers. Aided by increasing flow of intelligence from ordinary Iraqis, we are stepping up raids, seizing enemy weapons, and capturing enemy leaders. The United States, the United Nations, and the civilized world will continue to stand with the people of Iraq as they reclaim their nation and their future.

We're determined as well not to let murderers decide the future of the Middle East. A Palestinian state will never be built on a foundation of violence. The hopes of that state and the security of Israel both depend on an unrelenting campaign against terror, waged by all parties in the region. In the Middle East, true peace has deadly enemies. Yet America will be a consistent friend of every leader who works for peace by actively opposing violence.

All nations of the world face a challenge and a choice. In continued acts of murder and destruction, terrorists are testing our will, hoping we will weaken and withdraw. Yet across the world, they are finding that our will cannot be shaken. Whatever the hardships, we will persevere. We will continue this war on terror until all the killers are brought to justice, and we will prevail.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:30 a.m. on August 22 in Bend, OR, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Terrorist Bombings in Mumbai, India

August 25, 2003

I strongly condemn the bombings in Mumbai, India, which killed dozens of innocent people and injured many more. Acts of terror are intended to sow fear and chaos among free peoples. I hope that the perpetrators of these murders will be identified quickly and brought to justice.

On behalf of all Americans, I send condolences to all affected by today's tragedy and to the Government and people of India.

Statement on the Death of John J. Rhodes

August 25, 2003

John Rhodes was a statesman and a leader in the United States Congress. He was admired by Republicans and Democrats alike for his 30 years of tireless work for the people he represented and the country he loved. Laura joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to his wife, Elizabeth, and the entire Rhodes family.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in St. Paul, Minnesota

August 26, 2003

Thanks for the warm welcome. I appreciate such a huge response for our invitation to come for a little light meal. [*Laughter*] It's an honor to be back in the beautiful State of Minnesota and two such vibrant cities. The temperature differential is nice too, I might add. [*Laughter*]

I came up from Crawford today. What I really want to do is thank you for your support and your friendship and to let you know that today we're laying the groundwork for what is going to be a great national victory in November of 2004.

I appreciate the fact that you have contributed, but I want you to know I'm going to count on you to contribute more. I need you to tell your neighbors, and for those of you who go to coffee shops, you be telling them in the coffee shops that this President and this administration will continue to work for a positive and hopeful vision for every single American.

I'm loosening up, and I'm getting ready for the campaign. [*Laughter*] But there's going to be plenty of time for politics, because I've got a job to do. I'm focused on the people's business, and we have a lot on our agenda in Washington, DC. Until the political season starts for me, I will continue to work to earn the confidence of every American by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

My big regret today is that the First Lady is not traveling with me. She's in Crawford with Barney. [*Laughter*] But I want you to know that it is a great comfort to live in the White House with Laura Bush. She is a great First Lady, a fabulous wife. I love her dearly, and she sends her best.

I want to thank Ben Whitney for his willingness to lead this campaign here in the State of Minnesota. I appreciate my friend Rudy Boschwitz for taking a leadership role for this event today and for the remaining events. I want to thank all the State cochairmen, starting with a fine man and a guy who is doing a good job as your Governor, Tim Pawlenty. Tim, thank you for coming today.

I'll never forget the rally that I attended here in 2002 for United States Senator Norm Coleman. I'm sorry Norm can't be here, but it's a joy to work with him in the United States Senate. He is doing a fine job on behalf of the citizens of Minnesota.

I thank Congressman Gil Gutknecht for coming today. I appreciate his hard work, and it's been a joy to work with him and others of the Minnesota delegation. I want to thank your State auditor for coming. I appreciate the leadership of the legislature for being here, the speaker of the house as well as the Minnesota minority leader in the State

senate. I'm honored you all have taken time out of your day to come to say hello.

I appreciate my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the national fundraising chairman for Bush-Cheney. He's from Cincinnati, Ohio. He's a businessperson. He's taking time out of his life to work hard to see that we raise the monies necessary to wage a viable and strong campaign.

I want to thank Rob Eibensteiner, who is the chairman of the Republican Party of Minnesota. I want to thank former Governor Al Quie for coming. But most of all, I want to thank you all for your loyal and strong support.

You know, in the last 2½ years, this Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to the office of President of the United States to solve problems instead of passing them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. We are meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. And then our country was attacked, and scandals broke out in corporate America, and we were headed to war, which all affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief to get our economy moving again.

Here's what I believe, and here's what I know, that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows and people are more likely to find a job. I also understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It is not the Government's money; it is the people's money that we spend in our Nation's Capital.

We're returning more money for people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives that are needed to hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across our country so that every single person has a chance to realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. See, we believe that every child can learn the basics of reading and math. We believe every school must teach the basics of reading and math. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. In return for Federal money, we expect results in every single classroom so that not one child in America is left behind.

We reorganized the Government, the largest reorganization since the Defense Department was reorganized in the late forties and early fifties. And we did so to create the Department of Homeland Security to safeguard our borders and ports and to better protect the American people.

We passed a trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Minnesota's farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs and manufacturers. We passed budget agreements that is helping to maintain much needed spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people.

The United States Congress has shared in these great achievements. I particularly enjoy working with Speaker of the House Hastert

and Majority Leader Frist. I'm proud of Norm Coleman and the members of the congressional delegation that you've sent to Washington from the State of Minnesota. I will continue to work with these leaders to change the tone in Washington, DC, to get rid of the needless partisan bickering and to focus on the people's business and to concentrate on results.

And that's the nature of the men and women I've asked to join my administration, results-oriented people. I have put together a fantastic administration on behalf of the American people. There has been no greater Vice President of the United States than Richard B. Cheney. Mother may disagree. [*Laughter*]

In 2½ years, we have come far; we've done a lot; we've taken on a lot of problems. But our work is only beginning. We have great goals worthy of this great Nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen has a chance to work and succeed and realize the great promise of our country. It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we're keeping it.

Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; and we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet, our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our security. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. Free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And I believe that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. When we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, this great Nation is committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. Our great country is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges at home as well. We've got big challenges here at home, and no doubt, our actions will prove that we're equal to those challenges. First, I'm concerned about people not being able to find a job. I want our people working. And therefore, we'll continue to work to create the environment necessary to have a strong entrepreneurial spirit, to make sure capital flows, to make sure the workforce expands so that anybody in the State of Minnesota or elsewhere who wants to work and can't find a job will be able to do so.

We have a chance to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. A few weeks ago, the Congress took historic action to improve the lives of our older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and the Senate have passed reforms to increase the choices for seniors and to provide coverage for prescription drugs.

The recess is almost over. It is now time for both Houses to come together to iron out their differences and to get a bill to my desk. The sooner they finish the job, the sooner America's seniors and those of us who will be seniors soon will have a modern Medicare plan. We owe it to our seniors.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court. Yet, the system should not reward lawyers who are fishing for rich settlements. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget.

Medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution. I have proposed a plan—[*applause*]—I proposed a good plan to reform medical liability. The House of Representatives passed a good bill. It is stuck in the Senate. It is time for the

United States Senate to realize that no one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well. And I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members of the Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for Members of the Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. I came to your great State to lay out my vision for a comprehensive energy plan. And now it's time for the Congress to act. And the recent breakdown of the deliverability of electricity on the east coast should send a clear signal to the United States Congress that we need a comprehensive energy plan, that we need to modernize our system, that we need mandatory reliability standards, and we need incentives to encourage investment. This country also must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. For economic security and for national security, we must use our technology to explore in environmentally safe ways to increase the energy supply of the United States of America.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism by applying the best and most innovative ideas to helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on the Government and become independent through hard work. We must work to build on the welfare reform successes of the immediate past to bring work into the lives of more of our citizens.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so that more Americans will serve their communities and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion, to support the Christians and Jewish people and Muslims, all who've heard the universal call to help a neighbor in need, to encourage the mentoring of children and caring for the homeless and offering hope to the addicted.

A compassionate society must also promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more citizens owning their own home. We want people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want people to have control over their own medical accounts. We want there to be more ownership of small businesses in America because we understand when America—an American owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and they take responsibility for the decisions they make. We're changing the culture of America from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands that we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're concerned about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your employees and your shareholders. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

We can see the culture of responsibility and the culture of service growing around us, particularly since 9/11, 2001. You know, I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been significant. Our charities and our faith-based organizations are vibrant and strong all across America. And policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day. In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve

and the courage of America, and I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people.

All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use our strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. at the St. Paul RiverCentre. In his remarks, he referred to Ben Whitney and Rudy Boschwitz, Minnesota State finance cochairmen, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Patricia Awada, Minnesota State auditor; Steve Sviggum, speaker, Minnesota State house of representatives; and Dick Day, minority leader, Minnesota State senate.

Remarks at the American Legion National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri

August 26, 2003

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for that warm welcome. It is great to be here in St. Louis, Missouri, at the 85th annual convention of the American Legion. I wonder if I'm the only member here today from Post 77 in Houston, Texas.

Audience member. No. [*Laughter*]

The President. Seems like they'd have given you a better seat. [*Laughter*]

It is always an honor to be with people who have served America and who love America. When the American Legion held its first caucus in this city back in 1919, Legionnaires dedicated this organization to the service of God and country. Times change, but those are still the right priorities. On behalf of your fellow citizens, I thank the American Legion and the Ladies Auxiliary for your idealism and for your faithful service to God and country.

I'm honored to be traveling today with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Tony Principi. He served in Vietnam, and he serves his comrades in my Cabinet. He's a tireless advocate for our Nation's veterans. I want you to understand the facts of this good man's leadership. The budget for Veterans Affairs has gone up by $15 billion since I took office, a 30-percent increase. And my budget for fiscal year 2004 includes the largest discretionary increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs ever requested by a President. The Department, under Tony's lead, has made major progress in reducing the backlog of veterans' disability claims and the number of veterans waiting for health care. And we will continue to work to make sure those backlogs are eliminated.

I want to thank Ron Conley, the national commander of the American Legion, for his kind introduction and for his leadership of this distinguished group of citizens. I appreciate Senator Jim Talent and Congressman Todd Akin from the State of Missouri, who are here with us today. I thank Elsie Bailey, American Legion's lady auxiliary national president. I'm honored to be on the stage with Major General Patrick Brady, Medal of Honor recipient.

I know in the audience somewhere is my friend Arlene Howard. There she is. Arlene, thank you. I don't know if you remember the speech I gave in front of the Congress right after the attacks of September the 11th, but I held up the badge of one of the brave who were killed. It was the badge of Arlene's son. I'm honored you're here, Arlene. I appreciate you coming. I can't wait to give you a hug.

I want to thank the board of directors for the invitation. And I want to thank you all for being such great Americans. The American Legion is an effective and respected voice for the veteran, and you speak with authority. In the years following the First World War, leaders of this organization helped to establish the U.S. Veterans Bureau. Following World War II, you helped secure passage of the GI bill. You've supported the memorials to those who fought in World War II and Korea and Vietnam, so the sacrifices of those wars are always remembered.

For two generations, you have demanded a full accounting of Americans whose fate is undetermined. And my administration will

not rest until that accounting is complete. And having fought under the American flag and seen it folded and given to families of your friends, you are committed, as am I, to protecting the dignity of the flag in the Constitution of the United States.

In the 20th century, the American flag and the American uniform stood for something unique in history. This Nation gained great power, and we used that power in the service of human freedom. Americans liberated continents and concentration camps. America's Armed Forces humbled tyrants and raised up and befriended nations that once fought against us. Our Nation led a great alliance against a Communist empire until that empire was gone and its captives were free. America's veterans have all been a part of this great story of perseverance and courage, and people and nations across the world are better off because of your service.

On Memorial Day last year, I visited the military cemetery at Normandy and saw the grave of one of the founders of the American Legion, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. When Roosevelt landed with the first wave of his unit on D-day, he and his men found themselves in a different part of Utah Beach from the point they expected. Roosevelt quickly sized up the situation and called in a whole division to the new sector. Turning a challenge into an advantage, he declared, "We'll start the war from here."

Well, a great challenge came to America on September the 11th, 2001. Enemies who plotted for years in secret carried out missions of murder on our own soil. It was a day of suffering and sorrow. It was also a day of decision for our country. As a united and resolute people, America declared, "We'll start the war from here."

In this first war of the 21st century, America and all free nations are facing a new threat and fighting a new enemy, a global network of terror supported by outlaw regimes. We've seen the hand of the terrorist enemy in the attacks on our country. We've seen the deadly work of the terrorists in Bali, in Mombasa, in Riyadh, in Jakarta, in Casablanca. On a single day last week, we saw the true nature of the terrorists once again. In Baghdad, they attacked a symbol of the civilized world, the United Nations headquarters, and killed men and women who were there to bring humanitarian help to the Iraqi people. They killed a respected U.N. Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello from Brazil. And on the same day in Jerusalem, a terrorist murdered 21 innocent people who were riding a bus, including little children and 5 Americans.

The terrorists' aim is to spread chaos and fear by killing on an ever-widening scale. They serve their cause by sacrificing the innocent. They celebrate the murder of women and children. They attacked the civilized world because they bear a deep hatred for the values of the civilized world. They hate freedom and religious tolerance and democracy and equality for women. They hate Christians and Jews and every Muslim who does not share their narrow and violent vision.

No nation can be neutral in the struggle between civilization and chaos. Every nation that stands on the side of freedom and the value of human life must condemn terrorism and act against the few who would destroy the hopes of the many.

Because America stands for freedom and tolerance and the rights of all, the terrorists have targeted our country. During the last few decades, the terrorists grew bolder, believing if they hit America hard, America would retreat and back down. Five years ago, one of the terrorists said that an attack could make America run in less than 24 hours. They're learning something different today. The terrorists have not seen America running; they've seen America marching. They've seen the armies of liberation. They have seen the armies of liberation marching into Kabul and to Baghdad. The terrorists have seen speeding tank convoys and roaring jets and Special Forces arriving in midnight raids. And sometimes justice has found them before they could see anything coming at all.

We've adopted a new strategy for a new kind of war. We will not wait for known enemies to strike us again. We will strike them in their camps or caves or wherever they hide before they hit more of our cities and kill more of our citizens. We will do everything in our power to deny terrorists weapons of mass destruction before they can commit

murder on an unimaginable scale. The security of this Nation and our friends requires decisive action. And with a broad coalition, we're taking that action around the globe. We are on the offensive against terror, and we will stay on the offensive against terror.

In Afghanistan, we acted against the Taliban regime that harbored Al Qaida and ruled by terror. The Taliban felt pretty strong when they were whipping women in the streets and executing them in soccer fields. When our coalition moved in, the Taliban ran quickly for the caves. But the caves could not hide these killers from justice. We've sent a message that is understood throughout the world: If you harbor a terrorist, if you support a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists. And the Taliban found out what we meant.

Afghanistan today is a friend of the United States of America. Because we acted, that country is not a haven for terrorists and the people of America are safer from attack. That nation still faces challenges, and our coalition forces there still face dangers. Yet we're working every day to make sure that Afghanistan finds its future as a free and stable and peaceful nation.

America and the new Afghan Army are working together in a major operation called Warrior Sweep, which is hunting down terrorists one by one. NATO is now taking a leading role in keeping Afghanistan secure. New roads are being built, medical clinics are opening, and many young girls are going to school for the first time, thanks to our coalition and the United States of America.

The Al Qaida terrorists lost a base in Afghanistan, but they operate in many other places. We're on their trail, from Pakistan to the Philippines to the Horn of Africa. Earlier this month, we captured a major terrorist named Hambali. He's a known killer and was a close associate of September the 11th mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed. Hambali was one of the world's most lethal terrorists and is suspected of planning the attack on Bali and other recent acts of terror. We're making steady progress. Nearly two-thirds of known senior Al Qaida leaders, operational managers, and key facilitators have either been captured or killed.

Now Al Qaida is wounded, yet not destroyed. It remains a grave danger to the American people. Terrorist networks are still finding recruits and still plotting attacks and still intending to strike our country. Yet our resolve is firm, and it is clear: No matter how long it takes, we will bring to justice those who plot against America.

We've also pursued the war on terror in Iraq. America and our coalition removed a regime that built, possessed, and used weapons of mass destruction, a regime that sponsored terror, and a regime that persecuted its people. Our military coalition destroyed the Iraqi regime while taking extraordinary measures to spare innocent life. The battle of Iraq was conducted with the skill and honor of a great military, the United States Armed Forces.

Because of our military, catastrophic weapons will no longer be in the hands of a reckless, unstable dictator. Because of our military, Middle Eastern countries no longer fear subversion and attack by Saddam Hussein. Because of our military, Iraq will no longer be a source of funding for suicide bombers in the Middle East. Because of our men and women in uniform, the torture chambers in Iraq are closed, the prison cells for children are empty, and the people who speak their minds need not fear execution.

In all the debates over Iraq, we must never forget the brutal nature of the regime of Saddam Hussein. Mass grave sites, literally thousands of people buried in mass grave sites, were recently discovered by our troops. They contain the remains not only of executed men and women but of executed children as well. Our people in uniform, joined by fine allies, ended this nightmare in Iraq, removed a threat to the world, and they have made our Nation proud.

The work of our coalition in Iraq goes on because that country is now a point of testing in the war on terror. The remnants of Saddam's regime are still dangerous, and terrorists are gathering in Iraq to undermine the advance of freedom. Al Qaida and the other global terror networks recognize that the defeat of Saddam Hussein's regime is a defeat for them. They know that a democratic Iraq in the heart of the Middle East would be a further defeat for their ideology

of terror. They know that the spread of peace and hope in the Middle East would undermine the appeal of bitterness, resentment, and violence. And the more progress we make in Iraq, the more desperate the terrorists will become. Freedom is a threat to their way of life.

They have sabotaged water mains and oil pipelines and attacked local police. Last week, they killed aid workers bringing food and medicine to the country. The terrorists have killed innocent Iraqis and Americans and U.N. officials from many nations. They have declared war on the entire civilized world, and the civilized world will not be intimidated. Retreat in the face of terror would only invite further and bolder attacks. There will be no retreat.

We are on the offensive against the Saddam loyalists, the foreign fighters, and the criminal gangs that are attacking Iraqis and coalition forces. We're receiving more and more vital intelligence from Iraqi citizens, information that we're putting to good use. Our recent military operations have included almost 200 raids netting more than 1,100 detainees. Since the end of major combat operations, we have seized more than 8,200 tons of ammunition, thousands of AK–47s, and rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons.

And as we help the Iraqi people establish security, we are working through that famous deck of cards. So far, of the 55 most wanted Iraqi leaders, 42 have been captured or killed. The brutal, vicious sons of the dictator are gone. Recently, we captured the former Vice President of Iraq. He was one of Saddam Hussein's most feared enforcers. And recently, as well, we captured the man known as "Chemical Ali." He earned his nickname by ordering chemical weapon attacks on whole Iraqi villages, killing thousands of citizens. "Chemical Ali's" savage career is over. The search goes on for other former leaders of Iraq, and we will find them. After decades of smothering fear, the Iraqi people can be certain: The regime of Saddam Hussein is gone, and it is never coming back.

Ultimately, the security of Iraq will be won by the Iraqi people themselves. They must reject terror, and they must join in their own defense. And they're stepping forward. More than 38,000 Iraqis have been hired as police officers. Iraqi police and border guards and security forces are increasingly taking on critical duties. Over 1,400 Iraqi civil defense corps volunteers are being trained to work closely with coalition forces. Twelve thousand Iraqis will be trained in the next year for the country's new army.

At the same time, 31 countries have contributed 21,000 forces to build security in Iraq. I will continue to challenge other countries to join in this important mission.

In most of Iraq today, there's steady progress toward reconstruction and civil order. Iraq's Governing Council, representing the nation's diverse groups, is steadily assuming greater responsibility over the country. The coalition provisional authority led by Ambassador Paul Bremer is implementing a comprehensive plan to ensure a successful, democratic Iraq and a better future for the Iraqi people.

Building a free and peaceful Iraq will require a substantial commitment of time and resources, and it will yield a substantially safer and more secure America and the world. I'll work with the Congress to make sure we provide the resources to do the work of freedom and security.

Iraq's progress toward self-determination and democracy brings hope to other oppressed people in the region and throughout the world. It is the rise of democracy that tyrants fear and terrorists seek to undermine. The people who yearn for liberty and opportunity in countries like Iran and throughout the Middle East are watching, and they are praying for our success in Iraq.

More progress will come in Iraq, and it will require hard and sustained efforts. As many of you saw firsthand in Germany and Japan after World War II, the transition from dictatorship to democracy is a massive undertaking. It's not an easy task. In the aftermath of World War II, that task took years, not months, to complete. And yet the effort was repaid many times over as former enemies became friends and allies and partners in keeping the peace.

Likewise, the work we do today is essential to the peace of the world and for the security of our country. America is a nation that understands its responsibilities and keeps its

word. And we will honor our word to the people of Iraq and those in the Middle East who yearn for freedom. Murderers will not determine the future of Iraq, and they will not determine the future of the Middle East.

In Jerusalem as in Baghdad, terrorists are trying to undermine the hopes of peace with acts of violence. Their desperation also grows as the parties move closer to a just settlement. But terrorists do not speak for the Palestinian people. They do not serve the Palestinian cause. And a Palestinian state will never be built on the foundation of violence.

Now is the time for every true friend of the Palestinian people, every leader in the Middle East, and the Palestinian people themselves to cut off all money and support for terrorists and actively fight terror on all fronts. Only then can Israel be secure and the flag rise over an independent Palestine. And to bring that day closer, America will be a consistent friend of all who work for peace.

For nearly 2 years, on many fronts, the United States and our friends have conducted a global campaign against terror. We met the enemy on desert sands and mountain passes, wherever they choose to gather and fight. We've had successes, yet our mission continues. The stakes could not be greater for the American people. All of us who have taken an oath to defend this Nation will do our duty.

Our military forces in the war on terror are showing the definition of "duty." In hostile conditions and remote parts of the earth, brave Americans are sacrificing for freedom and the security of others. Some have been wounded, and some have been killed. The veterans in this hall understand the loss and sadness that have come to military families. This Nation is grateful to every man and woman who serves, and we honor the memory of all who have fallen.

We also remember what this fight is about. Our military is confronting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other places so our people will not have to confront terrorist violence in New York or St. Louis or Los Angeles. Our Armed Forces are doing the work they are called to do. They're taking the fight to the enemy so that America and our friends can live in peace.

The war on terror is a test of our strength. It is a test of our perseverance, our patience, and our will. This Nation has been tested before. By the character of men and women like you, we've come through every trial. And so it is today. Our course is set. Our purpose is firm. No act of terrorists will weaken our resolve or alter their fate. Our only goal, our only option, is total victory in the war on terror. And this Nation will press on to victory.

Thank you for having me. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the St. Louis Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida's chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1; former President Saddam Hussein and former Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan of Iraq; former Iraqi Ba'ath Party official Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as "Chemical Ali"); and L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Report of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board

August 26, 2003

Today the Columbia Accident Investigation Board released its report on the tragic accident that claimed the lives of seven brave astronauts. These men and women assumed great risk in service to all humanity. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I once again recognize their sacrifices and those of their loved ones. Their service will never be forgotten.

Our Nation also owes its appreciation to Admiral Harold Gehman, Jr. (retired) as well as the other 12 members of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board. As Board Chair, Admiral Gehman and his team have worked tirelessly over the past seven months conducting an exhaustive review of the circumstances surrounding this accident. The next steps for NASA under Sean O'Keefe's leadership must be determined after a thorough review of the entire report, including its recommendations.

Our journey into space will go on. The work of the crew of the *Columbia* and the heroic explorers who traveled before them will continue.

Proclamation 7695—Women's Equality Day, 2003

August 26, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified on August 26, 1920, guaranteed the right to vote for American women. Women's Equality Day commemorates this constitutional amendment and is an opportunity for citizens across our country to honor those who took part in the long and difficult struggle for women's suffrage, as well those since 1920 who have continued to fight for equal rights for women.

Beginning with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, women's suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, and lobbied for enfranchisement of American women. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott led this movement and advocated an amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee women the right to vote. Through their vision and dedication, these women advanced the fight for equal rights.

Today, American women are making a difference in their communities and workplaces. Women's accomplishments in education, business, science, art, medicine, athletics, and every other field have made America better and stronger. The courage and determination of American women are exemplified in the personnel serving in our Armed Forces. Women across America are also helping to secure our country by serving as police officers, firefighters, doctors, nurses, paramedics, and first-responders.

Americans believe in opportunity for all and on this day, we honor the achievements of women who have charted the path to equal opportunity.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 26, 2003, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 27, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on August 28.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senator Christopher S. "Kit" Bond of Missouri in St. Louis

August 26, 2003

Thanks for the warm welcome. It's such an honor to be here in the great State of Missouri. I am here because I believe Kit Bond is the right man for the United States Senate.

And I want to thank you for his—for your strong support for this fine Senator. Looks like you've got a few friends here in Missouri, Senator. [*Laughter*] Actually, I wasn't his first choice to come tonight. [*Laughter*] Laura is stuck on the ranch. [*Laughter*] But she sends her very best to Kit and to Linda.

Just as a kind of step back, I am really fortunate that Laura Bush said yes when I asked her to marry me. She is a great First Lady and a fabulous wife. I appreciate—you know, Senator Bond and I both married above ourselves. [*Laughter*] And it's great to see Linda. She's done a lot for him. She shortened his speeches and shortened his waistline. [*Laughter*] He's getting in fighting form for the '04 elections.

I'm also honored to be here with former Senator Jack Danforth. What a distinguished citizen of your State he is. He's working hard to bring peace to the Sudan. It's about as tough as an assignment as somebody can be given. But because of his steady demeanor and patience and his faith in freedom and peace, I think we'll achieve peace in the

Sudan, and Jack Danforth will deserve a lot of credit.

I'm also honored to be here with the junior Senator from the great State of Missouri, a man who's doing a fabulous job on your behalf, Senator Jim Talent.

Speaking about Missouri citizens doing a fine job, John Ashcroft is a very good Attorney General. I am proud of the job he is doing. You trained him well. [*Laughter*]

Also traveling with me today is another member of my Cabinet, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a friend of the veterans, Tony Principi. Thank you for coming, Mr. Secretary. He and I were at the American Legion Convention today and had a chance to talk about our foreign policy. And I'll speak a little bit about that later on.

I appreciate Congressman Todd Akin and Congressman Kenny Hulshof as well from the mighty delegation from the State of Missouri. These are two strong allies and good friends, and I appreciate their service.

I know that Secretary of State Matt Blunt is with us, and his wife, Melanie. I know that Catherine Hanaway, the speaker of the house, is with us, and I know that State Senator Peter Kinder are here. And I appreciate the members of the State delegation from Missouri for coming as well.

Ann Wagner is the cochair of the Republican National Committee, and I'm really proud of her service to the Republican Party not only here in Missouri but across the Nation. Annie, thank you very much for your hard work.

And finally, I want to thank the State chairman for Bush-Cheney 2004. Everybody's got to have a good uncle—[*laughter*]—and I've got a great uncle.

The reason I'm here is because Kit Bond understands the challenges which face our Nation, and he's willing to join in constructive ways to do something about it. I think the best types of people who go to Washington are those who can recognize a problem and then have the courage and will to do something about it. And that's what I appreciate about Kit Bond. He and I share this value, that the future of freedom and peace depends upon the actions of America. We believe that this Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We believe that everybody yearns for freedom and that every nation should be free.

This is—history has given this country a charge to keep, and we're keeping it. You know, this Nation was pretty secure for a while, secure that oceans could protect us. And then 9/11, 2001, came upon us. It was an historic moment because we realized that we weren't safe from an enemy which hates what we stand for. Because we love freedom and human dignity, because we love the fact that people can worship freely and speak freely, there's an enemy in the world which hates us. And since we're not going to change, in order to do our jobs, we must find them before they hurt America again.

Kit Bond understands that the best way to secure the homeland of America is to find the enemies of freedom one by one and bring them to justice. And I appreciate his support in making this world more free, making America more secure, and making the world more peaceful.

We're after Al Qaida. Slowly but surely, we're dismantling the terrorist network which has hijacked a great religion, which murders in the name of Islam. One by one, we're bringing them to justice. We've captured or killed over two-thirds of the Al Qaida operative network. Just a while ago, we got this guy Hambali, who we think was the instigator of the bombing in Bali. One by one, Al Qaida is meeting its demise. It doesn't matter where they hide, it doesn't matter where they cringe, the United States of America will find them and bring them to justice.

Part of the war on terror is to prevent hostile regimes from teaming up with terrorist networks. And that's why we went into Afghanistan. I sent a clear message: If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist. And the Taliban in Afghanistan understand exactly what we mean.

And I appreciate Senator Bond's understanding of the need for the United States to uphold doctrine. When we say something in this country, we better do it, for the credibility of the world.

We've got a lot of work to do in Afghanistan, and we're doing it. We're training an

Afghan army so they can best protect themselves. NATO is now involved in Afghanistan. And I want to thank our German friends for taking an active role in making Afghanistan more secure. We're building roads; we're opening up hospitals; and many young girls go to school for the first time, thanks to the United States of America.

We gave a clear ultimatum to Saddam Hussein that he must disarm. He chose defiance, and Saddam Hussein is no more. He will not be able to threaten anybody with weapons of mass destruction. He will not be able to provide money for suicide bombers that were killing Israelis. Saddam Hussein will no longer have torture chambers. He is a man who is not in power, thanks to the United States of America and our friends and allies.

And we've got a lot of work to do in Iraq. You see, terrorists can't stand the thought of a free society in the Middle East. People who hate freedom are revolted at the fact that there may be a society that honors human rights and dignity, that treats men and women equally. Terrorists can't stand the thought of success in Iraq.

We're at a crucial point in history in Iraq. And I look forward to working with Senator Bond and Senator Talent and Members of the House to provide the resources necessary to make sure that Iraq is not only secure but that Iraq is free and peaceful. A peaceful Iraq is in the long-term interest of the United States of America.

And we're making progress there. You see, if you've been tortured—and remember, this is a country where we discovered thousands of people who had been executed and placed in mass graves, men, women, and children executed by Saddam Hussein. It's a country which had been terrorized and brutalized. It's a country which couldn't comprehend freedom. So it's going to take awhile for people to develop the habits necessary for a free society to emerge. But I'm absolutely confident, when we stay the course, a strong ally of the United States and any country which loves freedom will emerge. And that will have a positive effect on Israel and a Palestinian state. It will have a positive effect in a region which is—harbored and educated and grew terrorists.

The long-term interests of the United States of America depend on this country doing what's right. And I'm proud to have Senators who understand that and are willing to stand with this administration to make sure we keep our word to the people of Iraq, that we hear the ambitions of those who love freedom in Iran, that we stand strong against the terrorists who would like to destroy the Middle East peace process. This country is leading the world to freedom and peace. It's inherent in our values. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is God's gift to every individual in the world.

I appreciate Senator Bond's support of a policy which says that when this country sees hopelessness and despair around the world, we will not turn our back. I'm proud to be leading a nation which is leading the world in the fight against AIDS on the continent of Africa.

I recently traveled to Africa. I'll never forget going to Uganda, a country which is beginning to show what is possible in arresting that terrible pandemic. We went to a clinic, and we saw young mothers ravished by AIDS, the desperate look in their eyes. I could tell when they looked at the President of the United States, they saw hope. I remember seeing the children's choir—these are children of orphans—who sang hymns to us. It's a sad moment for me because I realized their moms and dads were gone. It was a joyous moment, though, to realize that people of faith had come to surround them with love. They too look at the United States for hope.

I want to thank Senator Bond for his support on the AIDS initiative. The United States is leading the world in an incredibly important work of human rescue.

I believe our foreign policy is compassionate when it needs to be compassionate and tough when it needs to be tough. But it's based upon a strong belief that freedom is universal and the strong knowledge that free societies will be peaceful societies.

When I came to Washington, DC, our military was underfunded, and morale was beginning to suffer. I proposed defense budgets to prepare our military for threats

of a new era. Senator Bond was a strong supporter of those defense budgets, and no one in the world today can question the skill, the honor, the sacrifice, the utility of the United States military.

When we came into office, the country was in recession. And we started getting better. The economy was getting a little better; then the enemy hit us. And then we had some corporate scandals; we had some people in our society who forgot what it means to be a responsible citizen. They didn't tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees, and that affected the people's confidence. And then on your TV screens you saw the words "March to War," which is not a very conducive phrase for economic development. But we acted. We passed tough laws to hold corporate criminals to account, and I want to thank Senator Bond's support on that.

And in order to get our economy growing, I called upon the Congress. Senator Bond and Senator Talent and others were strong supporters of historic tax relief. We understand that when people have more money in their pocket, they will save, spend, invest, and when they do so, somebody is more likely to find a job.

I appreciate Senator Bond's willingness to join the administration and insisting that Congress hold the line on spending. We understand whose money we spend in Washington. It is not the Government's money; it is the people's money. And he is a good steward of the people's money.

When Congress returns, we'll be debating a crucial issue, and that is Medicare. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, we have a chance to reform the system that needs to be reformed. Inherent in both plans out of the House and the Senate is the idea that we will trust seniors to make the choices that they need in order to develop their health care plans and health care needs. And inherent in both plans is the knowledge and understanding that we need to have prescription drug coverage for our seniors. I want to thank Senator Bond for his willingness to stand up and join us in modernizing Medicare. We owe our seniors a modern Medicare system.

There are a lot of issues that relate to health that will be before our Congress. A significant issue is the issue of frivolous lawsuits. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care. Frivolous and junk lawsuits drive up the cost of Medicare, Medicaid, veterans health benefits. Medical liability reform, therefore, is a national issue which requires a national solution.

We got a good bill out of the House of Representatives. It is stuck in the United States Senate. Kit Bond is one of the Senators, if it does get unstuck, will be responsible for passing good medical liability reform out of the United States Senate.

This country needs an energy bill. We need to have a national energy strategy. The blackouts on the east coast should make it clear to the skeptics in Congress that we need to modernize the electricity grid. We need mandatory reliability law. We need to encourage more investment into the transmission of electricity. We need to conserve more. We need more efficiency. But for the sake of economic security and for the sake of energy security and national security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I appreciate working with Senator Bond on commonsense environmental policy. We both disagree with the judge's decision about the waterflows into the Missouri River. And we both agree that we must do a better job of preserving one of the most important assets we have in America, which is our national forests. We need a commonsense, reasonable forest policy to prevent the raging forest fires from destroying this incredibly valuable asset.

I have an obligation to fill the judiciary with capable, honest, decent people. I have fulfilled that obligation. I have nominated superb women and men to the Federal bench, people who will interpret the law, not use the bench from which to legislate. And Senator Bond has been a strong supporter of my judicial nominees. But we have a problem in the United States Senate. There are some Senators who refuse to give my nominees an up-or-down vote. It is time for some of those Senators to stop playing politics with American justice.

I have an obligation to set great goals for this country. One of the goals I've set is to spread peace and freedom. Another great goal is to spread compassion throughout our land. I want our society to be an ownership society. See, I believe if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future. I believe if you own something in America, it helps with dignity and independence of life. We want more people owning their home. We have a minority homeownership gap in America. I look forward to working with Senator Bond to help narrow that gap.

We want people owning and managing their own health care plans. We want people owning and managing their own retirement plans. Kit Bond is a strong believer in the small-business owner of Missouri and America. We want more people owning their own small business. I look forward to working with Senator Bond to promote the ownership society of America.

Finally, I look forward to working with Senator Bond to get a faith-based initiative out of the United States Senate. I believe strongly that this Government should not fear faith but should welcome faith-based givers, neighborhood healers and helpers, when we see somebody who hurts. We all asked a question in Washington, DC: "Is the program effective that's helping save life? Is the Christian program or the Jewish program or the Muslim program effective at changing lives and saving lives?"

That's the question we ought to be asking in Washington. The truth of the matter is, the great strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of the American people. We have people who hurt in our country. We have children who need to be mentored. We've got people who are hopelessly addicted to drugs. We need to welcome the armies of compassion, no matter what their faith, into the compassionate delivery of help and succor to those of our citizens who hurt.

Kit Bond will be a valuable ally in the passage of a much needed faith-based initiative that allows for faith-based programs to access Federal money, all in the aim of loving a neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

You just heard some of the reasons you need to send him back up there. Perhaps the greatest reason is he believes like I do, that both of us are fortunate to represent great people, that we're fortunate to be in positions of responsibility to represent the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

I want to thank you for helping this good man. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. at the Renaissance Grand Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator John Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan; Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt and his wife, Melanie; Catherine Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State house of representatives; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder; Ann Wagner, cochairman, Republican National Committee, and chairman, Missouri Republican Party; William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, Missouri State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida's chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Proclamation 7696—To Extend Duty-Free Treatment for Certain Agricultural Products of Israel

August 27, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. On April 22, 1985, the United States entered into the Agreement on the Establishment of a Free Trade Area between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Israel (FTA), which the Congress approved in the United States-Israel Free Trade Area Implementation Act of 1985 (the "FTA Act")(19 U.S.C. 2112 Note).

2. On November 4, 1996, the United States entered into an agreement with Israel concerning certain aspects of trade in agricultural products, effective from December 4, 1996, through December 31, 2001 (the "1996 Agreement"), in order to maintain the general level of reciprocal and mutually advantageous concessions with respect to agricultural trade while acknowledging differing interpretations as to the meaning of certain

rights and obligations in the FTA as to such trade.

3. Section 4(b) of the FTA Act provides that, whenever the President determines that it is necessary to maintain the general level of reciprocal and mutually advantageous concessions with respect to Israel provided for by the FTA, the President may proclaim such withdrawal, suspension, modification, or continuance of any duty, or such continuance of existing duty-free or excise treatment, or such additional duties as the President determines to be required or appropriate to carry out the FTA.

4. Consistent with section 4(b) of the FTA Act, President Clinton issued Proclamation 6962 of December 2, 1996, to provide to Israel through the close of December 31, 2001, access into the United States customs territory for specified quantities of certain agricultural products of Israel free of duty or certain fees or other import charges, consistent with the 1996 Agreement.

5. On December 31, 2001, the United States entered into an agreement with Israel to extend the 1996 Agreement through December 31, 2002, in order to allow for additional time to negotiate a successor arrangement to the 1996 Agreement. Consistent with section 4(b) of the FTA Act, I issued Proclamation 7554, of May 3, 2002, to provide to Israel through the close of December 31, 2002, access into the United States customs territory for specified quantities of certain agricultural products of Israel free of duty or certain fees or other import charges. Several rounds of negotiations were held in 2002 but did not result in conclusion of a successor arrangement to the 1996 Agreement.

6. On December 31, 2002, the 1-year extension of the 1996 Agreement expired. In order to allow additional time to conclude negotiations, the United States and Israel each have elected to extend through 2003 the tariff treatment provided for agricultural products in 2002 under the 1996 Agreement. Israel has already extended through 2003 the tariff benefits for United States agricultural imports provided in 2002 under the 1996 Agreement.

7. Consistent with section 4(b) of the FTA Act, I have determined that it is necessary, in order to maintain the general level of reciprocal and mutually advantageous concessions with respect to Israel provided for by the FTA, to provide through the close of December 31, 2003, duty-free treatment for specified quantities of certain agricultural products of Israel.

8. Section 604 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2483) (the "Trade Act") authorizes the President to embody in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) the substance of the relevant provisions of that act, and of other acts affecting import treatment, and actions thereunder, including removal, modification, continuance, or imposition of any rate of duty or other import restriction.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 4 of the FTA Act and section 604 of the Trade Act, do hereby proclaim:

(1) In order to maintain the general level of reciprocal and mutually advantageous concessions with respect to Israel provided for by the FTA, and, in particular, to provide duty-free treatment for specified quantities of certain agricultural products of Israel, subchapter VIII of chapter 99 of the HTS is modified as provided in the Annex to this proclamation.

(2) Any provisions of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that are inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

(3)(a) The modifications to the HTS made by the Annex to this proclamation shall be effective with respect to goods that are the product of Israel and are entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after January 1, 2003, including entries for which the liquidation of duties has not become final under section 514 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1514).

(b) The provisions of subchapter VIII of chapter 99 of the HTS, as modified by the Annex to this proclamation, shall continue in effect through the close of December 31, 2003.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 28, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on August 29.

Memorandum on Export-Import Bank Support for U.S. Exports to Iraq

August 27, 2003

Presidential Determination No. 2003–33

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Determination on Export-Import Bank Support For U.S. Exports to Iraq

Consistent with section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, I hereby determine and certify to the Congress that it is in the national interest for the Export-Import Bank to guarantee, insure, or extend credit, or participate in the extension of credit in support of United States exports to Iraq.

You are directed to report this determination to the Congress and to provide copies of the justification explaining the basis for this determination. You are further directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Plan for Pay Increases for Civilian Federal Employees

August 27, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for across-the-board and locality pay increases payable to civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule (GS) and certain other pay systems in January 2004.

Under title 5, United States Code, civilian Federal employees covered by the GS and certain other pay systems would receive a two-part pay increase in January 2004: (1) a 2.7 percent across-the-board increase in scheduled rates of basic pay derived from Employment Cost Index data on changes in the wages and salaries of private industry workers, and (2) a locality pay increase based on Bureau of Labor Statistics' salary surveys of non-Federal employers in each locality pay area, which would cost about 10 percent of payroll for the calendar year. Including increases for blue-collar and other workers, the total Federal employee pay increase would cost about 13 percent of payroll in calendar year 2004. For Federal employees covered by the locality pay system, the overall average pay increase would be about 15.1 percent.

For each part of the two-part pay increase, title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement an alternative pay plan if I view the adjustment that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate due to "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare." For the reasons described below, I have determined that it would be appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority to limit the January 2004 GS pay increases.

A national emergency has existed since September 11, 2001, that now includes Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Full statutory civilian pay increases costing 13 percent of payroll in 2004 would interfere with our Nation's ability to pursue the war on terrorism. Such increases would cost about $13 billion in fiscal year 2004 alone—$11 billion more than the 2 percent overall Federal civilian

pay increase I proposed in my 2004 Budget—and would build in later years.

Such cost increases would threaten our efforts against terrorism or force deep cuts in discretionary spending or Federal employment to stay within budget. Neither outcome is acceptable. Therefore, I have determined that a total pay increase of 2 percent would be appropriate for GS and certain other employees in January 2004.

A 2 percent pay increase should be complemented by $500 million dollars from the Human Capital Performance Fund, which I proposed in my FY 2004 Budget and which is now contained in H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. Favorable congressional action to establish full funding for this initiative would be a key step towards rewarding the highest performing and most valuable employees in agencies with rigorous and disciplined performance management systems. Providing higher pay for employees whose exceptional performance is critical to the achievement of the agency mission is preferable to spreading limited dollars across-the-board to all employees regardless of their individual performance or contribution.

I will allocate 1.5 percent of the 2 percent total increase to an across-the-board increase under section 5303 of title 5, United States Code, and use the remaining 0.5 percent of payroll to continue the implementation of the locality pay program under section 5304. Our national situation precludes granting larger pay increases to GS employees at this time.

Accordingly, I have determined that—

(1) Under the authority of section 5303(b) of title 5, United States Code, the pay rates for each statutory pay system will be increased by 1.5 percent, effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2004; and

(2) Under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments in the percentages set forth in the attached table will go into effect in January 2004.

Finally, the law requires that I include in this report an assessment of the impact of my decision on the Government's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees. I do not believe this decision will materially affect our ability to continue to attract and retain a quality Federal workforce. To the contrary, since any pay raise above the 2 percent I have proposed would likely be unfunded, agencies would have to absorb the additional cost and could have to freeze hiring in order to pay the higher rates. Moreover, GS quit rates are at an all-time low of 1.7 percent per year, well below the overall average quit rate in private enterprise. Should the need arise, the Government has many compensation tools, such as recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and special salary rates, to maintain the high-quality workforce that serves our Nation so very well.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Message on the 40th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" Speech

August 28, 2003

I send greetings to those gathered to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic "I Have a Dream" speech.

Through his leadership, courage, and determination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought tremendous good to our country. His vision and words caused Americans to examine their hearts and live up to the ideals of our Constitution.

In his speech 40 years ago, Dr. King expressed his dream that people would be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. He viewed the summer of 1963 as a time for America to renew its commitment to equality. Today, we have come a long way, but there is still work to do to realize Dr. King's dream. As we honor this important anniversary, I encourage all Americans to continue the march to equality and opportunity for all.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a memorable celebration.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 7697—Family Day, 2003

August 28, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Children thrive in loving families where they are taught, nurtured, and comforted. By spending time with our children and stressing the importance of making the right choices, parents and other family members help them develop into confident, successful individuals.

Families can help secure a healthy tomorrow for their children by providing guidance, staying involved, and serving as role models. I am committed to supporting strong families and strong marriages to help ensure that every child grows up in a safe, loving family. Statistics show that children from two-parent families are less likely to end up in poverty, drop out of school, become addicted to drugs, have a child out of wedlock, suffer abuse, or become a violent criminal. Because stable families should be the central goal of American welfare policy, I have proposed spending up to $300 million a year to find the most effective programs to strengthen marriage.

Parents play a critical role in discouraging harmful behavior such as experimenting with alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Research shows that teens often listen to their parents when it comes to decisions about harmful substances and risky behaviors. Regular family activities provide opportunities for parents to communicate important messages and enhance their relationships with their children. Recent studies from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that teens from families who eat dinner together were less likely to use illegal drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes, while teenagers who rarely eat dinner with their parents were more likely to engage in these unhealthy activities.

Families and all Americans can act together to educate our youth about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and help them grow into healthy, responsible, compassionate citizens. In order to ensure a brighter future for our Nation, and safe, healthy, and happy lives for our children, our children must learn that avoiding harmful substances is an ongoing responsibility. As we work to educate our next generation about making healthy choices, we renew our commitment to the American family.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 22, 2003, as Family Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day by engaging in activities to strengthen the relationships between parents and children and help fight against substance abuse and risky behaviors.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 2, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 3.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Federal Expenditures for Climate Change Programs and Activities

August 28, 2003

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Consistent with section 555(b) of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (Public Law 108–7), I transmit herewith a report prepared by my Administration of Federal expenditures for climate change programs and activities. This report includes both domestic and international programs and activities related to climate change, and associated expenditures by line item as presented in the President's Budget Appendix

amended to reflect enacted FY 2003 appropriations.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 29.

Memorandum on Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning

August 29, 2003

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning

On March 28, 2001, I issued a memorandum for the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) directing that certain conditions be placed on assistance for family planning activities provided to foreign nongovernmental organizations by USAID.

Because family planning grants are awarded by the Department of State outside of USAID as well as through USAID, you are hereby directed to extend the requirements of the March 28, 2001, memorandum to all assistance for voluntary population planning furnished to foreign nongovernmental organizations and appropriated pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act, whether such assistance is furnished by USAID or any other bureau, office, or component of the Department of State.

As set forth in the March 28, 2001, memorandum, this policy applies to certain assistance provided to foreign nongovernmental organizations. Such organizations do not include multilateral organizations that are associations of governments. This policy shall not apply to foreign assistance furnished pursuant to the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–25).

The foregoing directive is issued consistent with the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including sections 104 and 104A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 2, 2003]

NOTE: This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 3.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 23

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on July 21 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area impacted by a statewide power outage on August 14–16.

August 25

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah of Kuwait to the White House on September 10.

The President announced the recess appointments of Charlotte A. Lane and Daniel Pearson as members of the U.S. International Trade Commission.

The President announced the recess appointment of A. Paul Anderson as a Federal Maritime Commissioner.

The President announced the recess appointment of Daniel Pipes as a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The President announced the recess appointment of John Paul Woodley, Jr., as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

The President announced the recess appointments of David W. Fleming, Jay Phillip Greene, and John Richard Petrocik as members of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation.

The President announced the recess appointments of Juanita Alicia Vasquez-Gardner and Patrick Lloyd McCrory as members of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced the recess appointments of Jose A. Fourquet, Adolfo A. Franco, and Roger Francisco Noriega as members of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation.

The President announced the recess appointments of Ephraim Batambuze and Walter H. Kansteiner as members of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation.

August 26

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Minneapolis, MN. En route, aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India to express his condolences and offer assistance concerning the August 25 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India. Upon his arrival in Minneapolis, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteers Edward and Jane Bardon.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to St. Louis, MO, where he greeted American Legion member and volunteer James Mareschal.

In the evening, the President returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands to the White House on September 3 for a working breakfast.

August 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a videoconference with senior national security advisers.

In the evening, at the Bush Ranch, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a tour and barbecue for members of the White House press corps.

August 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

August 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes on July 21–August 13.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released August 23

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Pennsylvania

Statement by the Press Secretary on emergency assistance to New York

Released August 25

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of the Prime Minister of Kuwait

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice at the 104th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Released August 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands

Released August 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the Presidential election in Rwanda

Released August 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan

Transcript of an interview with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice by ZDF German Television on July 31

Released August 29

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New York

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS
Washington DC 20402

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